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ABSTRACT

This document contains three papers from a symposium on images of human resource development (HRD) that was conducted as part of a conference on HRD. "Analyzing HRD through Metaphor: Why, How, and Some Likely Findings" (Darren C. Short) examines the question of what the uses of metaphor in HRD say about how those in the field view the world and how that view might be limiting and presents an argument for completing an analysis of HRD metaphor, a framework for the analysis, and examples of what such an analysis might reveal. "Scientific Paradigms and Their Implications for a Vision of HR/HRD" (Alice E. McAndrew) discusses how paradigms from the fields of physics, biology, and chemistry can provide "new lenses" through which to view the field of HR/HRD by echoing themes of increasing roles for consciousness, holism, and interconnectedness in our universe. "The Meaning of the Meaning of Work: A Literature Review Analysis" (Neal Chalofsky), examines the state of research concerning the concept of the meaning of work by proceeding from the theoretical foundation of the content motivation theorists and focuses on what research reveals about the meaning of work as a motivational construct. All three papers contain substantial bibliographies. (MN)

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Images of HRD

Symposium 4

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Analyzing HRD Through Metaphor: Why, how, and Some Likely Findings

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Metaphors can be viewed as central to the task of accounting for how we think about things, make sense of reality, and set the problems we try to solve. What then does the uses of metaphor in HRD say about how those in the field view the world, and how might that view be limiting? This article contains an argument for completing an analysis of HRD metaphor, a framework for that analysis, and examples of what might be discovered.

Keyword: Metaphors

Justifying a metaphor analysis of HRD

HRD as a three-legged stool, an octopus, a centipede, a clover leaf? Organizations with memory, identity, culture, and an ability to learn? Researchers using narrative portraits, path analysis, grand tour questions, and pilot studies? Practitioners with career anchors and psychological contracts who run canned training, environment scans, and brainstorming sessions? There is little doubting that when it comes to the language of HRD, metaphors abound. But, what do these metaphors tell us about HRD, how can we use them to our advantage, and in what ways might they be dangerous for the field?

One tradition in metaphor treats it as being central to the task of accounting for our perspectives on the world: how we think about things, make sense of reality, and set the problems we later try to solve (Schön, 1993); and also helping to constitute that reality and prescribing how it ought to be viewed and evaluated (Tsoukas, 1991). In HRD, it is likely that we operate totally unaware of the influence of metaphors, for often they are so deeply embedded in our daily language that we are blinded to their effect on our thinking and behavior (Kendall & Kendall, 1993). However, once identified and made explicit, the appropriateness of metaphors can be questioned, and new metaphors can be explored to create a new reality, a new understanding of experience, and a new meaning to pasts, daily activities, and what is known and believed (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Inns (1996) argued that metaphor analyses could be applied to fields of study and such analyses have already been completed for psychology (Leary, 1990) and organizations (Morgan, 1997). What then if a metaphor analysis was completed on HRD; what might it find? It could conceivably identify how certain metaphors influence how we view reality, how we conceive of issues, how we design our approaches, and how we behave in certain situations. Making those metaphors explicit would allow for a dialogue on their appropriateness and how they help or hinder the field. It would also allow for an exploration of alternative metaphors; the potential outcome being greater awareness of what underpins our actions, of the alternatives available to us, and of new metaphors to orient future behavior.

In this article, I outline the arguments for completing a metaphor analysis for HRD, offer a framework for that analysis, and offer examples of what might be discovered. I also explore the potential benefits to the field of those findings. The paper is structured so that readers are first introduced to metaphor theory and then metaphors from other disciplines, before I describe three approaches to exploring metaphor in HRD.

Metaphors: definitions and impact

Metaphors can be traced back centuries, at least as far as Aristotle circa 330 BC (Leary, 1990). They work by forging an equivalence of identity between separate elements of experience in a way that encourages us to understand what is common. Through assertions that subject A is, or is like, B, the processes of comparison, substitution, and interaction between the images of A and B act as generators of new meaning (Morgan, 1980), as well as organizers of perception (Barrett & Cooperrider, 1990). Social sciences metaphors typically work by

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structuring inherently vaguer concepts in terms of more concrete concepts (Tsoukas, 1991), and are most powerful when the differences between the subjects or concepts are significant but with some areas of overlap (Morgan, 1980).

Despite the long history of metaphor, there remains considerable disagreement about their significance: something reflected by the over 125 definitions of metaphor discovered by Soskice in 1985 (Leary, 1990). There exists a long-running debate on whether metaphors are anything other than a literary tool. On one side, metaphor is regarded as a figure of speech of primarily aesthetic value, and therefore as no more than a literary and descriptive device for embellishment. However, another tradition (and the one I focus on in this article) treats metaphors as being central to the task of accounting for our perspectives on the world (Schön, 1993), and as the cognitive lenses used to make sense of and shape our reality (Kendall & Kendall, 1993). The full nature of the debate between the two views of metaphor is beyond the scope of this article, however it is important when interpreting the remainder of the article to note that these differing views exist.

Where metaphors are viewed as being more than linguistic tools, they are considered as describing an external reality, and helping to constitute that reality and prescribe how it ought to be viewed and evaluated (Tsoukas, 1991, p. 570). As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argued, we do not just use metaphorical language, but we also use metaphors to structure, understand, talk about, and perform. That view was supported by the results of a study by Sapienza (Sackmann, 1989), which found that metaphorical language influences not only perceptions, but also subsequent actions.

The potential impact metaphors have on our behavior brings to the fore the importance of exploring those we use and highlights the potentials for influencing behavior by changing metaphors. The issue-at-hand is what subjects are used in the metaphors, what relationship is asserted, how do the subjects and asserted relationship influence behavior, and what alternative subjects and asserted relationships could lead to more beneficial behaviors? Schön (1993) described this a "process by which new perspectives on the world come into existence" (p. 137). As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) described,

"new metaphors have the power to create a new reality... If a new metaphor enters the conceptual system that we base our actions on, it will alter that conceptual system and the perceptions and actions that the system gives rise to" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 145).

Lakoff and Johnson placed particular emphasis on the potential for achieving changes to conceptual systems by introducing new imaginative and creative metaphors. Such metaphors, they argued, "are capable of giving us a new understanding of our experience. Thus, they can give new meaning to our pasts, to our daily activities, and to what we know and believe" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.130).

Metaphors from other disciplines

Given the significance of metaphor in framing realities and in creating new meaning perspectives, metaphors offer a potential route to explore the realities of groups. Inns (1996) argued that metaphorical analyses could be applied to a field of study, and used to reveal core values and assumptions, trace a field's progression and emerging philosophies, and explore more appropriate alternative frameworks. Such an approach has already been taken by Kendall and Kendall (1993) with information systems, by Dunn (1990) with Human Resource Management, and by Leary (1990) with psychology. However, the analysis of metaphors for organizations has come closest to studying metaphors in HRD, albeit by studying those applicable to Organization Development rather than training.

Using metaphors to describe organizations has a long history. For example, when Brigham Young led the Mormons to Utah, he described their organization as a beehive: everyone working hard in an orderly fashion and not questioning the authority of the church hierarchy (Brink, 1993). This is but one of many metaphors applicable to modern organizations, each constituting and capturing the nature of organizational life in different ways and offering powerful, distinctive, but essentially partial insights (Morgan, 1980). Some include: organizations as machines, organisms, psychic prisons, ecological systems, theaters, instruments of domination, garbage cans, icebergs, and soap bubbles.

As well as exploring metaphors for whole organizations, metaphorical terms are also commonly found to describe organizational issues or are common in language about organizations. Examples include: organizational culture; drivers of change; vision and mission; organizational memory; re-engineering organizations; and learning organizations. Some of these are good examples of 'dead metaphors,' that is statements that were once obviously metaphorical but which have since, through regular usage, become accepted in their own non-metaphorical right.'

There is also evidence of metaphors being used in organizational change to diagnose and transform organizations. Morgan (1980), for example, described the use of metaphor both as a supplementary and contradictory approach to organizational analysis; and Armenakis and Bedeian (1992) described the advantage of change agents using metaphor to arrive at problem diagnoses and solutions rapidly. Other examples include: understanding organizations by listening to the metaphors given by customers, employees, and other stakeholders (Brink, 1993), and analyzing metaphors to shed light on underlying assumptions that affect surface organizational behavior (Conrad, cited in Cleary & Packard, 1992). Perhaps the most famous example of metaphor in organizational change is that of Lewin's 'unfreezing-change-refreezing.'

On transformation, Sackmann (1989) hypothesized that metaphors can influence employees' thinking, feelings, and their construction of reality in ways that facilitate organizational transformation. Specifically, Keizer and Post (1996) described using metaphoric gaps as catalysts of change; Morgan (1986) offered eight metaphors, suggesting different interventions as being appropriate for each; and Palmer and Dunford (1996) described fifteen common organizational metaphors and referred to their use in strategic planning, structural change, organization development, organizational culture, and organizational change.

A framework for exploring metaphor in HRD

Given Inns' (1996) assertion that metaphorical analyses could be applied to a field of study, what then if we applied that to the field of HRD? Brink (1993) identified three applications of metaphor to better understand organizations: explore metaphors used by employees, customers, and other stakeholders; explore how metaphor is, and can be, used to describe the organization to outsiders; and encourage the formulation of new metaphors that might facilitate change. These could be usefully re-phrased to structure the three-way exploration of metaphors in HRD in the following sections:

- identifying what current metaphor usage (from its many sources) tells us about the field of HRD;
- identifying how metaphor is used, or can be used, to describe the field of HRD; and
- identifying how new perspectives for the HRD field can be generated using metaphor.

Data collection

Several data collection methods have been suggested to explore metaphors which could be used in addressing these three bullets, including: interviews and focus groups (Kendall & Kendall, 1993); reviewing documents and records of employee discussions (Kock & Deetz, in Cleary & Packard, 1992); observing symbols, objects, facilities, and language with an eye toward metaphorical content (Cleary & Packard, 1992); and participant observation (Brink, 1993). In each case, the methods are qualitative and each author used multiple collection methods. Various analysis methods have also been used, including: Q-methodology (Kendall & Kendall, 1993), and theme-identification (Cleary & Packard, 1992).

Applying those methods to identifying metaphors in HRD suggests such approaches as:

- interviews or focus groups with various stakeholder groupings (HRD practitioners, educators, researchers, students, clients);
- reviewing printed materials (e.g. books and magazines for practitioners, academic texts and journals, research conference papers, and organization HRD strategy documents);
- observation (e.g. at training and consultancy sessions run by practitioners, HRD education classes, meetings of academic and practitioner groups); and
- case studies of educational, research, and practitioner-based settings.

Identifying current metaphor usage in HRD research, practice, and education

There are three primary areas of focus for the identification of metaphors used in HRD: research, practice, and education.

Metaphor in HRD research

Regardless of the discipline, there are many metaphors contained in the language of research methods and analysis. Examples taken from recent HRD literature include: stream of research, narrative portraits, path analysis, hybrid designs, key questions and themes, grand tour questions, triangulation of data sources, and pilot studies. However, of potentially greater interest to those in HRD is the use of metaphors in research, with recent examples including:

- to introduce an area of research - Frantz (1998) used the image of a football team quarterback when introducing research into the decision-making process leaders go through in 'calling audibles;'
- for data collection - Scanlon (1999), in researching the voluntary sector, asked focus group participants to describe metaphors for the volunteer climate;
- as data given by research participants - Bierema (1999), after studying women executives, reported a particular recurring metaphor offered by those interviewed; and
- in data validation - Ardishvili (1999), after interviewing independent HRD consultants, validated the preliminary results by sharing a summary of emerging themes and metaphors with interviewees.

Metaphor in HRD practice

As already noted, several authors have explored the use of metaphors by practitioners to diagnose and transform organizations, and described the role of metaphors as a communication tool in organizational changes. However, little has been published about the specific usage of metaphors by HRD practitioners or to describe practice. Such an analysis could identify: what metaphors-in-use say about the core values and assumptions of people in HRD; where those in the field may have become blinkered by operating under unquestioned metaphors; and what alternative metaphors exist and their impact on behavior.

The purpose of this article is to argue the case for a research agenda on metaphors rather than to present research findings, however let me list just a sample of metaphors from recently published HRD articles:

- Metaphors for how HRD works: as a strategically important *partner*; through strategic *interventions*; by *harnessing* workplace learning;
- Metaphors for what HRD seeks: *alignment* in organizations; *unleashing* of human expertise; *root* causes of problems;
- Metaphors for HRD concerns: *fad driven* HRD and *blind application* of interventions; *canned* training; *mechanical adherence* to good practice;
- Metaphors for learning: learning as a *compass for navigating*; *triggers* of learning; *virtual learning communities*;
- Metaphors for the topics HRD deals with: *whole person development*; organizational *culture*, *memory and scripts*; *global markets*;
- Metaphors for HRD methods: mentoring as a *tool*; evaluation through *smile sheets*; *brainstorming*.

Metaphor in HRD education

Although little has been written specifically about metaphor in HRD education, much is in print about the use of metaphor more generally in education that has a potential read-across to HRD. Ortony (1975) described metaphors as being "used as teaching devices since the earliest writings of civilized man" (p. 45). The potential benefits of using metaphor in education include: permitting teachers to provide or transmit meaning for unfamiliar or abstract concepts and providing the most memorable ways of learning; providing a way of passing from a 'familiar system' to a to-be-learned' system, directing the learner's attention to key information, and encouraging learners to connect events into a coherent structure; and providing an efficient means of transmitting large chunks of information in a memorable manner through the mnemonic powers of vivid images.

Writings on metaphor usage in education therefore suggest that metaphors offer the potential to be used in describing the HRD field to students, or in teaching aspects of the field. A potential advance for the field could come from studying which metaphors are being used, and which metaphors and methods are most successful in educating students of HRD.

Using metaphor to describe HRD

Metaphors for the field of HRD have three potential uses:

- to better describe the field to those outside of it;
- to better communicate complex aspects of the field to HRD students and clients; and
- to highlight differences of opinion on the nature of the field, and differences between HRD and other disciplines.

The metaphors used in HRD, as illustrated earlier in the article, provide an insight to t he various aspects of the field (the people, the environment they operate in, the problems they address, the approaches they take, etc), but without describing the whole field. That stated, one does gain an insight to the whole field by looking for themes in those metaphors and identifying what Averill (1990) described as 'abstract metaphors:' subordinate categories of metaphor for the most part not found in ordinary speech. For example, one emerging abstract metaphor for HRD identified from the metaphors listed earlier is that 'problems are divides to be crossed or closed.' That leads to such language in recent HRD literature as: skills gap; theory-to-practice gap; a bridge to link individual and organizational development; bridging the producers and consumers of HRD research; research-practice gap; and linking HRD to strategy. Another apparent abstract metaphor for the field is that of 'organizations can be treated as human entities.' That leads to such language as: organizational health; organizational identity; organizational memory; and organizational role shock.

If we agree with Schön (1993) that metaphors frame realities, then such metaphors as 'problems are divides to be crossed or closed' and 'organizations can be treated as human entities' may well influence how those in HRD conceptualize, and design solutions for, certain problems. If we also agree with Lakoff and Johnson (1980) that metaphors can help to create new realities, then the question arises as to what alternative metaphors could replace these two and produce different ways of conceptualizing problems and organizations.

Such meta-analysis of metaphors provides only a limited picture of HRD without providing one metaphor for the whole field. Several authors though have written metaphorically about HRD, for example, Lee (1998) described the metaphorical links between HRD and clover, with the three parts of a clover leaf representing HRD theory, practice, and being. However, arguably the most widely recognized metaphor for HRD is Swanson's three-legged stool, which Swanson (1999) described as "a visual portrayal of the components of the theoretical foundation of HRD" (p. 2). Although not a definition of HRD processes, the stool stressed what Swanson described as the unique integration of psychological, economic, and systems theories in the HRD context, which have since been supplemented with ethics. McLean (1998) also offered the metaphor of the HRD centipede to stress limitless sources of input into the complexity of HRD, and the HRD octopus (whose eight tentacles were viewed as more manageable than the hundred legs on a centipede).

Whereas metaphors to describe the HRD field have focused on objects (stool, centipede, clover leaf), those describing the development of the field appear to have had a strong link to the 'journey' metaphor that Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argued was one of the central metaphors of Western culture. The journey metaphor embodies notions of progress, direction, and purpose, and specific examples from recent HRD articles include: HRD on a theory-building journey; journey management of HRD institutions, body of knowledge, and direction; reorienting the theoretical foundations of HRD; HRD as a boundary-flexing, evolutionary system; HRD at a crossroads, with a dominant path, signposts, and a road map; HRD as having taken a detour; and the HRD stream.

All of the metaphors so far cited in this section have originated from within HRD, and a study of those metaphors, although potentially illuminating and useful for the field, would omit an important source of HRD metaphors: those used about the field by those from outside of HRD. Exploring the HRD-related metaphors used by current and potential clients and partners of those in HRD, and those in related disciplines such HRM and organizational psychology, would assist in understanding how they view HRD and identify sources of common ground and potential differences.

Using metaphor to generate new perspectives on HRD

So far, I have focused on identifying and exploring metaphors already in use by those in HRD (in research, practice, and education), and those used to describe HRD. Yet, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) asserted that metaphors could create new realities as well as define existing ones. For HRD, that could imply exploring alternatives to such HRD metaphors as: the stool; the centipede; the clover leaf; problems are divides to be crossed or closed; organizations can be treated as human entities; and HRD is on a journey.

There are two approaches to generating new perspectives: considering existing metaphors from other fields and their potential use in HRD; and generating new metaphors. I shall explore each in turn.

Using existing metaphors from other fields

'Importing' metaphors from other fields offers those in HRD the opportunity to reflect on how they could be adapted for use in this field. One area of potentially useful 'imports' is that of consultancy, where the role of the consultant has been likened metaphorically to: helper, colleague, oracle, shoe clerk, entrepreneur, detective, advocate, friendly co-pilot, navigator, and many more. Each metaphor emphasizes particular aspects of consultant behavior, allowing the discussion to focus on whether such behavior adds value to the consultancy or hinders the consultant's effectiveness. The shoe clerk, for example, illustrates where a consultant approaches problems with a fixed number of possible processes or 'solutions' and has to mold problems to fit them.

Identifying and exploring metaphors for consultancy raises such questions as: how relevant are they to HRD consultants, how often do we use them and what are the consequences of such an approach, what would be the benefits in HRD education of using these metaphors to highlight various approaches and bear-traps,' and what other metaphors might be appropriate for the various roles we play in HRD? On that latter point, what about such possible metaphors for HRD consultants as: missionaries; historians; librarians; interpreters; mouthpieces; fall guys; flag-bearers; and doctors?

The field of organizational studies offers another example of the potential of applying metaphors from other fields to HRD. For example, what if HRD was viewed within the broader 'organization as an organism' metaphor as being the eyes and ears of management? How might that result in different perceptions of HRD roles from the view of HRD within the broader 'organization as a machine' metaphor, where HRD could be seen as the lathe operator who grinds the machine parts to the correct size? Alternatively, what if we view HRD as a torch shining light into the unexplored corners within the metaphor of 'organizations as psychic prisons'?

Generating new metaphors

Although there are no set instructions for devising metaphor (Davidson, 1978), most authors agree that the process makes significant use of past experience, perceptions, and a triggering by unusual comparisons. Schön (1993) described one three-stage process for generating new metaphors: noticing or feeling that A and B are similar, without being able to say similar with respect to what; describing relations of elements present in a restructured perception of both A and B, that is formulating an analogy; and constructing a general model for which a redescribed A and B can be identified as instances. That process starts by posing a kind of riddle - how is one object like another? Once entertained, those seeking answers to the riddle notice new features of both objects, leading to a transformation of phenomena.

Exploring how the HRD field can be seen as other unrelated things offers the potential of transforming how we perceive HRD, which can in turn change our behavior. Using Schön's (1993) three-stage process, we would begin by exploring our experiences to identify how HRD is similar to other concepts or objects. That would lead to analogies, and eventually to general models. A poster submission to the 1999 annual conference of the Academy of HRD (Short, 1999) illustrated the first two stages of Schön's process: noticing a similarity and exploring analogies. By asking in what ways the training process was similar to the effects of heat in transforming an ice-cube into steam, Short drew analogies between ice and pre-trained employees, and between the realizing of steam as a higher state and the transformation potential of training.

One area in particular need of new 'generating' metaphors is in the description of the whole HRD field and its relations to other disciplines. How satisfied are we that the stool, centipede, clover leaf, and others like them, sufficiently capture the nature of HRD in its many forms? What alternatives exist that capture aspects of HRD missed by those metaphors? What alternatives exist that capture the same aspects in better ways? In what ways do the existing metaphors limit our perceptions of reality and our behaviors, and how can we shift away from that position?

Obviously, because of the nature of this paper, I have raised far more questions than answers. However the purpose has been to illustrate the potential benefits from generating new metaphors and, as such, I trust that the questions offer a suitable illustration of the avenues available to explore.

Conclusions

Despite there being well over 125 documented definitions of metaphor, there is a clear tradition that views them as central to the task of accounting for our perspectives on the world. Often though, they are so deeply embedded that people are blinded to their influence. Within that tradition, metaphors are viewed as framing our realities, and so not only influencing our language but also our behavior. As such, the metaphors used in HRD influence how reality is framed by those in the field, how problems are conceptualized, how solutions are designed, and how efforts are evaluated. That influence could benefit or hinder the field and gives rise to discussions on how perspectives, language, and behavior of those in HRD can be influenced by changing the metaphors-in-use.

Metaphor is so prevalent in our language that it is easy to find examples from any field or discipline, and academics in several disciplines related to HRD have completed formal analyses of metaphor usage. Two such areas are psychology and organizations. In the former case, metaphors have been traced back centuries providing illustrations of how metaphors have influenced psychological thinking. As for organizations, there are many published accounts of metaphors to describe whole organizations and organizational issues, as well as accounts of metaphors used to diagnose and transform organizations.

Knowing that metaphorical analyses have been applied to other fields raises the question of how to approach such a study for HRD. In this paper, I have offered a structured framework for that study under the three headings of:

- exploring current metaphor usage in HRD - by using qualitative methods to explore metaphor usage in HRD research (including for data collection and validation), in HRD practice (including the language used to describe the aims of HRD, and its processes, concerns, and methods), and in HRD education (including describing the field to students and in teaching complex, substantial, or abstract aspects of the field);
- exploring metaphors for the field of HRD - both by using metaphors designed to describe the field (such as the stool, centipede, and clover leaf), and by identifying themes in HRD language (such as the tendency for HRD to view certain problems as gaps or divides to be bridged or closed); and
- generating new perspectives on HRD - both by applying metaphors from other fields (such as metaphors for consultancy), and by generating new metaphors to describes aspects of the field, the field itself, and the relationship between HRD and other disciplines.

To summarize, I have set out how research could explore the use of metaphor in HRD and reasons for wanting to undertake such a task, and have provided a metaphorical taster' of what that research might discover. As described, it is the 'first step' in a research 'journey' and 'a process for bridging the divide between where HRD is and where it needs to be' in its understanding of metaphors and their impact. As such, perhaps the way I conceive of the research provides a perfect illustration of the impact of HRD metaphors on my own thinking and actions.

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Scientific Paradigms and Their Implications for a Vision of HR/HRD

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Scientific paradigms can provide "new lenses" from which to view the field of HR/HRD. Paradigms from physics, biology and chemistry echo themes of an increasing role for consciousness, holism and interconnectedness in our universe. These same themes have implications that point the way for a new vision for HR/HRD as organizational architects of human development. Holistic approaches require, not only developing the intellectual capital of individuals, but the whole person with emotion, spirituality and ethics.

Keywords: Paradigms, Human Resources, Vision

In his book The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Thomas Kuhn introduced the concept of the scientific paradigm which he defined as "a constellation of achievements - concepts, values, techniques, etc. - shared by a scientific community and used by that community to define legitimate problems and solutions" (Kuhn, 1962). At any specific point in history the scientific community shares a prevailing paradigm that informs and shapes the direction of work in the field. Perhaps John Casti (1990) stated it best when he said, "for most scientists major paradigms are like a pair of spectacles that they put on in order to solve puzzles". Following his metaphor he further indicates that when a paradigm shift occurs, the glasses get smashed and a new pair is put on; once again, transforming the shape of everything and providing a new vision of "truth". The new glasses will provide scientists with new puzzles to be solved while advancing what Kuhn referred to as "normal science." As Einstein so succinctly stated, "The theory tells you what you can observe."

The purpose of this paper is to review some of the scientific research creating paradigms that shape our world. The science contributing to these paradigms is largely taken from the field of physics, biology and chemistry. First a history of scientific paradigms will be presented that illustrates the likelihood that we are currently experiencing a major paradigm shift, from the well-ordered universe of classical physics, to a more chaotic but ultimately self-organizing universe. The paradigms are pointing to a vast interconnectedness of all things, in which our role is not as a separate observer, but more that of an active creator and participant.

For the purpose of this paper we will define paradigms as scientific research taken from the hard sciences that provide examples or models which can be used to help construct understanding in many different fields. This incorporates aspects of Kuhn's definition; however, his definition varies at different points in his book (1962) and involves far more detail than needed for our discussion. The selection of paradigms for this paper is idiosyncratic and meant only to provide a representation from each of the different sciences of physics, chemistry and biology. After an examination of these paradigms we will look at implications for business in general, and then, specifically, HR/HRD. What are some of the dominant themes arising from the paradigms that have particular implications for forming a vision for the future of Human Resources (HR) and Human Resource Development (HRD)? What should be the central focus of our efforts? This paper is not meant to offer a definitive vision for HR/HRD; rather, it's to suggest areas for focus, thought and future dialogue.

In The Beginning . . . There Were Paradigms

While Thomas Kuhn was the first to use the term "paradigm" as an organizing construct giving shape and direction to scientific endeavor, mankind has always found ways to structure experience into organized wholes. Prior to Aristotle myth (mythos) was the traditional means for structuring experience, presenting sometimes a strange but authoritative account of facts not to be questioned (Capra, 1975;Casti, 1989). According to Joseph Campbell (1968), myths helped explain, harmonize and balance human experience by serving functions of a metaphysical, cosmological, social and psychological nature. Aristotle introduced the opposite side of the coin with "logos", the Greek term for presenting accounts of experience from which truth can be either demonstrated and/or debated. Thus "logos" was developed into "logic" beginning the process of deduction, replacing myth, and ultimately culminating with science (Casti, 1975).

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The Paradigm That Shook the World

Arguably one of the most dramatic paradigm shifts of all times was the move from Ptolemaic astronomy to the ideas of Copernicus (Casti, 1990). Ptolemaic astronomy is an example of a long-lived paradigm that placed the earth at the center of the universe with the sun and stars revolving around it. However, by the beginning of the sixteenth century, Europe's best astronomers realized that the paradigm was failing to explain newly discovered phenomena. Copernicus' sun centered universe eventually replaced Ptolemy's ideas although , this was not easily done since the Church supported the views of Ptolemy. Galileo who supported and wrote about Ptolemy's ideas was forced to recant these positions and spent the rest of his life under house arrest by the Church. The weight of scientific evidence eventually forced the Church to accept the fact that no longer was man at the center of the universe. Kuhn asserts that paradigm shifts rarely occur immediately after a new paradigm is presented; but rather, they occur when the old system is found to be inadequate. So it was for the views of Copernicus. Initially his theory was no better than Ptolemy's for orbital predictions. However, eventually the unsolved anomalies of the Ptolemaic system gave way to explanation by the Copernican system (Barnes, 1982: Cohen, 1985).

The Newtonian Paradigm

In the seventeenth century Newton used his calculus, specifically a set of differential equations to describe all motions of solid bodies (e.g., the motion of the planets). Einstein described Newton's equations of motion as "the greatest advance in thought that an individual was ever privileged to make" (Capra, 1996). Newton's stunning successes led nineteenth century scientists to believe that the world was a completely causal and deterministic mechanical machine running according to Newtonian laws. (Capra, 1996). The world of Newton can be described as a collection of independently existing objects that exist whether we observe them or not. The Newtonian world was mechanistic, predictable and controllable. If one knew the mass, position in space and velocity of a particle, its subsequent movements could be predicted. In this Newtonian world man and all living organisms were compared to machines (Capra, 1975,1996).That which couldn't be quantified lost value; hard sciences came to dominate, soft sciences were devalued. This attitude can be seen in organizations today, hard skills dominate, soft skills are often given considerable lip service, but ultimately considered secondary.

The Quantum Paradigm – The Way the World Is?

Two major developments in the first three decades of the twentieth century – relativity theory and atomic physics – completely shattered the central ideas of the Newtonian worldview: Einstein destroyed the idea of absolute space and time and Quantum theory further destroyed the Newtonian concept of elementary solid particles and the causal nature of physical phenomena. In the Special Theory of Relativity, Einstein showed that space is not three-dimensional and time is not a separate dimension but one indivisible unit spacetime, a four- dimensional continuum. Two observers at different locations in space viewing an event could see two different "realities" and even disagree on the basic question of which event preceded the other. With this idea it became clear that there is no Newtonian, objective, observer-independent reality with respect to describing its location in space and time (Casti, 1990).

It's important to realize that Quantum theory is a brilliantly successful practical branch of physics that has given us computer technology, lasers, electron microscopes, superconductors, transistors and nuclear power.(Capra, 1975; Casti, 1989). Quantum theory arose from efforts to describe the behavior of atoms and other constituents of the microworld. Newtonian science would have predicted that subatomic particles, such as atoms, electrons or photons, would have both a finite location and a definite motion; however, quantum theory says something quite different: you can have either one or the other but not both (Capra, 1976; Casti, 1990; Zohar, 1990).Which one results (wave or particle) depends on what the experimenter is looking for or how s/he sets up the experiment.

The philosophical implications of this theory are staggering and have rocked the world of science and can best be summed up by Neils Bohr's own words, "Anyone who is not shocked by quantum theory has not understood it." Einstein echoed a similar sentiment when he wrote in his autobiography, "All my attempts to adapt the theoretical foundation of physics to this (new type of) knowledge failed completely. It was as if the ground had been pulled out from under one, with no firm foundation to be seen anywhere, upon which one could have built (Capra, 1976).

Paradigms from Biology, Chemistry and Other Fields

During the twentieth century there has been a change in paradigms from mechanistic to holistic or systemic thinking in various scientific fields. It is not, however, progressive change but rather one characterized by backlashes and pendulum swings. The basic argument can be described as a conflict between the parts and the whole. Emphasis on

the parts is regarded as mechanistic, atomistic, deterministic and reductionist; emphasis on the whole is viewed as holistic, organismic and ecological. Holistic approaches are embodied in "systems thinking" that simultaneously emerged in several fields in the early part of this century (Bertalanffy 1968; Capra, 1996).

Systems concepts were brought to the life sciences by Paul Weiss who derived them from his earlier studies of engineering (Harraway, 1976) and spent the rest of his life promoting an organismic conception of biology. The idea behind systems thinking is that the whole is always greater than the sum of its parts, and its essential nature cannot be understood by dissection of either a theoretical or physical basis. This was a profound revolution in Western scientific thought and in diametrical opposition to the Cartesian paradigm that a whole can be understood in its entirety by careful examination of the properties of the individual parts. Systems' thinking of the 1920's was quickly enhanced by Gestalt psychology, ecology and as we have already seen, quantum physics.

Theory of Dissipative Structures or Chaos in Living Systems

Nobel laureate Russian born chemist and physicist, Ilya Prigogine, proposed the first detailed theory of self-organizing structures (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984). While a professor of physical chemistry at the Free University of Brussels, he constructed his theory based on physical and chemical systems, but freely admitted that his inspiration came from contemplating the problem of life. A major breakthrough for him occurred in the 1960s when he realized that open systems (living systems as opposed to physical systems) far from equilibrium must be described by nonlinear equations (Capra, 1996; Prigogine & Stengers, 1984).

In his theory of dissipative structures, he proposed that dissipation of energy or entropy is not associated with waste as in classical thermodynamics (Second Law of Thermodynamics) but leads to increased order. Prigogine has described linear systems or physical systems, as opposed to dissipative systems (living organizations), as tending to "forget their initial conditions as they move toward equilibrium" (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984). When equilibrium is approached universal laws apply and repetitive phenomena can be observed. Moving away from equilibrium, well-known characteristics of life appear that reflects uniqueness and variety (Wheatley; 1992).

The conceptual shift that evolves from Prigogine's work points to an idea that nature, instead of being like a machine, predictable, deterministic, in fact more like human nature, unpredictable, evolving, and creative. Instead of chaos or disorder leading to death, in living systems it actually leads to new forms of creativity and order. In their book Order Out of Chaos, Prigogine and Stengers suggest a new approach to nature not out of domination and control but rather cooperation, respect and dialogue. It is fitting they subtitled their book "Man's New dialogue With Nature".

Santiago Theory of Cognition and Autopoiesis – "Self Making"

The Santiago theory was introduced by two Chilean neuroscientists who postulated that mind is not a thing, but rather a process, a process that forms the very essence of life (Maturana & Varela, 1980). They identified mental activity as the essential organizing activity of life. Plants, animals and humans, all cognitively interact with their environments. According to this theory a brain and nervous system are not required for mind to exist. An ameba or a plant has no brain but is capable of perception and cognition and thus possess a mind. Cognition and mind cannot be narrowly defined as thinking, but involve emotions, perceptions and actions – the entire process of life . This theory of cognition may be the first scientific theory that resolves the Cartesian split between mind and matter; no longer are these two categories viewed as separate, but rather different aspects of the process of life (Maturana & Varela, 1980; Capra, 1996).

The theory of cognition is based on Maturana's concept of autopoiesis, a term he coined to describe the circular organization of the nervous system, which is the basic organization of all living systems. This is a process by which a living system allows environmental elements to trigger its own structural changes constituting an act of cognition. Maturana and Varela term this "bringing forth a world." Cognition does not represent an independent existing world, but rather through the process of living continually brings forth a world. From this each living system builds its own distinctive world based on its own unique structure. In the words of Varela, "Mind and world arise together"(Varela et. al., 1991).

Applications of Paradigms to the World of Business

Scientific paradigms find their way into all aspects of our society, including our social, political and business worlds (Capra, 1996; Overman 1996; Wheatley 1992). Frederick Taylor's now obsolete Scientific Management theories were also based on the linear thinking of Newton and relied on such concepts as fixed time and space, simple causal relationships and the importance of physical reality and what can be observed (Overman, 1996). Employees were basically viewed as lazy and irresponsible; in order to utilize them fully they should be paid only on a piecemeal basis so that they perform tasks with the minimum number of actions within prescribed time limits (Overman,

1996). While the Newtonian paradigm still has useful applications in many domains, it can be viewed as under siege since its mention is always of a pejorative nature in most current business literature (Wheatley 1992; Overman 1996; Murphy 1996).

In Newtonian organizations boundaries and compartments shape the way we view the world; there are highly structured roles and accountabilities. All experience is analytically chunked. Pie charts are regarded as Holy Scripture, pointing the way to greater market share, customer service or employee satisfaction. This 'thing" world is a world of scientific objectivity, a mechanical clocklike world that can feel distinctly anti-human (Wheatley, 1992).

Quantum mechanics broke the clock. Quantum organizations offer the potential for us to construct new realities. As with wave packets (wave/particle), we as individuals represent pure potential. We do not exist independently of our relationship with others. Certain people and settings stimulate unique aspects of our personalities, as we move from one environment to another, each with a new cast of characters, we become slightly different in a new way (Wheatley,1992).

Presently there is a great deal of information being written in an effort to apply chaos theory and self-organization in living systems to business organizations (Stumph, 1995; Wheatley, 1992). Many management experts are rapidly becoming disillusioned with efforts to measure, predict and control business outcomes. Many are beginning to believe that business organizations, as living systems, have tremendous capabilities to self-organize. They are advocating that leaders need to embrace the biological model to find new ways to give up control, empowering workers to act as independent agents interacting with one another in the creation of new business processes.

Paradigm Themes: The Role of Consciousness, Holism and Interconnectedness

From our review of the paradigms several themes emerge: consciousness, holism and interconnectedness. The Quantum paradigm brought with it startling implications for the role of consciousness in the universe. Arguably the most spectacular aspect of Quantum theory is whether a particle or wave state manifests depends on the observer or scientist who sets the conditions for the experiment. Somehow "we" seemed to enter the arena of objective science. This amazing revelation reflects a new epistemology that eliminates the idea that there is a reality separate from the observer. From the world of physics, Wheeler stated, "in some strange sense this is a participate universe." Prigogine, from the world of chemistry indicated, "Whatever we call reality is revealed to us through an active construction in which we participate." To distill this to its essence: Our human consciousness gives us a participatory and creative role in shaping our world (Zukav, 1989;; Skolimowski,1994) .

Scientific work from the field of physics, biology and chemistry point to a holistic and interconnected world, a web of relations connecting the various parts of a unified whole (Capra, 1976; 1996). It is not surprising that our organizations are now described and interpreted in the same manner (Burke, 1992; Morgan, 1998; Wheatley, 1992;). Meier (1985) asserts that our age is frequently symbolized by the geodesic sphere, which represents integration, interrelationship and a connection to the whole. This idea has influenced not only our scientific endeavors, but our educational philosophies, organization development activities and notions about human personality (Meier, 1985). Systems approaches are commonplace in our literature on organizations. But organizations still mostly have a mechanistic approach to the development of employees. There is a great deal of discussion about knowledge workers and their training needs, all in an effort to build "intellectual capital". But there is much to do in creating organizations that develop the whole person - intelligence, emotions, spirituality and ethics. In order to examine possibilities for a future vision for HR/HRD based on the themes of consciousness, holism and interconnectedness, we need to review where we have been.

The Old HR/HRD

In order to envision a new role for HR/HRD, it is important to review exactly what that role has been. It traditionally has not been one of real authority, being accorded a middle-level position in the organization, an unenviable position ensuring tongue-lashings from above as well as endless complaints from below or adjacent levels in the organization. Generally the role has not been a strategic one; HR people are not paid to think, they are paid to react and execute. They are expected to be the ones that stick their fingers in the dike to plug a leak, but they are not asked why the dike is leaking in the first place. It is not without good reason that HR has been called the "handmaiden of management" or more pejoratively, "lapdogs of management". Vision, major decision-making and control have not been the norm. Everyone knows that HR is there to serve its master: management.

Employee surveys run by companies, irrespective of industry, often reveal that the HR department is regarded as the most irrelevant department (Weiss, 1997). Is it any wonder that there is much talk today suggesting various ways to dismantle HR? While many are discussing new strategic roles for HR, there are those who suggest elimination of the HR department and that all HR functions should be outsourced (Ulrich, 1998).

Even though, HR has had a "caretaker" role ministering to the needs of employees and following the dictates of management - something new is afoot. Those employees we have been "caretaking" are now an organization's most valuable resource. More and more there is an increasing recognition that the only sustainable competitive advantage of organizations today is not their products, but rather their employees (Caudron, 1994). The central challenge facing today's organizations is transforming the knowledge of workers into productivity and leveraging intellectual capital (Ulrich, 1998).

An Emerging New Role - Developing the Whole Person?

Cognitive development, as an important part of consciousness has definitely expanded in the 20th Century. Behaviorism dominated psychology for over half this century and clearly denied there was a mind to be studied. Arguably, the most important development in psychology over the last half of this century is the ascendancy of cognitive science and that individuals can choose the way they think (Seligman, 1994). A recent Bureau of Labor Statistics report (Galagan & Wulf, 1996) indicates that the fastest growth industry is the adult learning industry because of the rapid changes in every field and occupation. We all know that there is a tremendous need for training and education for the new knowledge jobs. Even under the Newtonian paradigm, limited cognitive development has been acceptable goal for organizations (i.e., cognitive development related to doing one's immediate job). But the workplace today also demands the ability to form connections, to build relationships as exemplified by: the new emphasis on teamwork, the need for employees to assume temporary or permanent leadership roles and the need for diverse groups to work together, not only locally, but globally.

As we saw from Maturana and Varela's research, cognition not only encompasses thinking but emotions and the entire process of life. Morris (1993) indicates that most organizations have not taken into account research on adult development that emphasizes adult transitions and transformations, including feelings, thoughts and morals. Organizations will have to realize the importance of a holistic approach to organizational design and the development of its human resources. . All of this necessitates training, organizational design and organizational development to not only help people develop cognitively, but emotionally and ethically as well. It could be argued that because the work of knowledge workers requires a high level of functioning, the organization could become the biggest purveyor of and strongest force for human development in our society.

The concept of the learning organization certainly exemplifies the importance of organizational design to create a continuous learning environment for development. Peter Senge (1990) promotes a systems approach to the learning organization in which organizational learning includes teamwork, collaboration, creativity and all knowledge processes as part of the collective norms and values with a common meaning for all. Senge (1990) viewed the organization holistically and described five disciplines essential to the learning organization: 1) systems thinking, 2) personal mastery 3) mental models 4) shared vision and 5) team acquisition of knowledge. All of the disciplines are to be used by the individual to augment organizational knowledge, thus, ensuring organizational success. Even though Senge's work defines the learning organization, all of his disciplines are largely cognitive in nature, only one, personal mastery touches on issues of emotions and spirituality.

Role of Emotional Intelligence

It has been stated that "learning organizations assume the competence of all members" Confessore and Kops (1998). But we need to acknowledge that even your most competent members have periods in their lives when personal problems render them functionally incompetent. Also, sometimes people who otherwise function quite well have emotional "blindspots" that can be destructive. In today's environment, the mere mention of introducing training concerning anything to do with emotions is guaranteed to be greeted with disbelief and raised eyebrows. You could actually be viewed as a subversive. Yet, Daniel Goleman (1995) is pioneering the promotion of emotional intelligence and his work is beginning to open a discussion of the legitimacy of introducing such learning into business environments.

Goleman tells the story of a manager who had glaring blindspots regarding his own conduct resulting in disaster for the workplace. This manager was the epitome of abusiveness, which resulted in his employees being so intimidated that they would never give him honest feedback. While in many workplaces this may have had no outward consequences, in this workplace it was fatal: the plane he was piloting crashed because no one on the flight deck dared speak up to question his decisions (Koonce, 1996).

Goleman's (1995) research shows that emotional intelligence is emerging as a critical piece of our human development. He indicates that IQ may help a person get a job but it's emotional intelligence that helps him /her keep it. His research has demonstrated that the emotionally adept, those who understand and cope with their own feelings well, who can read and effectively handle the feelings of others, have a great advantage in both personal and work relationships. The ability to bounce back with optimism, after experiencing hardship and adversity, or respond

with equanimity to hostile attack is a great advantage in any arena. Goleman (1994) views emotional intelligence as a meta-ability: It determines our ability to use effectively the other skills we possess as well as our intellect.

Spirituality and Ethics

The paradigms show us that the world is interconnected at its most basic level and that consciousness is a part of all lifeforms, the planet and universe as well. This connectedness of all things has profound implications for spirituality and ethical behavior (Capra 1996; Zukav, 1989). Ecology is showing us that we can't abuse certain areas of the planet and not expect repercussions elsewhere. The world community is now looking in on the treatment of all the citizens of the world. Unethical treatment of people in organizations is now being exposed more than ever. People who have not found spiritual reasons to treat others equally, or haven't even discovered that treating people well or fairly makes good common sense, should at least be tempered by exposure for such behavior in the future. Once again, the boundaries are disappearing. Unethical behavior in business has been easily achieved in the past, but as boundaries weaken, it is, at least, getting somewhat harder to do.

It's reassuring to know that even in the field of economics, they are also wrestling with paradigm changes. John Tomer (1998) critiques the mechanistic economic models that reduce businesses to vehicles for achieving outputs and ignore intangible or "soft" assets such as leadership, principle, character, spirit and vision. He postulates a holistic model of economics that accounts for the "soft" assets being as critical for success as the usual hard assets (organizational structure, financial structure, etc).

As part of a vision for the future, HR/HRD should take a firm stand and plant itself firmly on ethical ground. Currently, employees, when they run afoul of managers, can expect little support from their own HR department even when they have been wronged. HR/HRD too often works to cover-up the wrongdoing of managers, rather than taking an independent fair-minded approach. Weiss (1997) describes corporate downsizing as an example of a "morally bereft" effort based on a short-term mentality by top executives to pump up the organizations bottom-line and their own compensation packages. He asks an excellent question, where is the moral outrage on the part of HR? He sadly concludes there is none because "HR is often an accessory to the slaughter".

Now some will say it's not our place to take an ethical stance against upper management. However, if HR/HRD wants to craft itself as consultants, coaches of people development and as architects of organizational environments, then it must take on this role or risk having very little credibility with the human resources it's there to develop. Serving as a "check and balance" on upper management's ethics should ultimately be welcomed by upper management; it could save them a lot of lawsuits.

We can compare this "check and balance" system to the organization of our government with its three branches of government serving to balance the actions of one another. The organization with its hierarchical structure has been an anomaly in a democratically constructed country for some time. We are already seeing this structure change with the emergence of matrix organizations. The higher cognitive development of people will call for more democratically designed organizations, as well as systems approaches for maintaining ethical integrity.

A New Strategic Direction?

Some will say that it's a Herculean task for HR/HRD to lead the charge in promoting the full development of employees. Being an architect of human development, perhaps, is a clarion call only to the brave. But is there a more ethically responsible stance to maximize the productivity of employees? Should we envision anything less when we consider that human resources were originally used to serve production, but production is now being designed to serve human resources (Meier, 1985). It seems HR managers should be a step ahead of the human resources they are there to manage. This requires adopting a strategic orientation to the organization. Recent articles based on surveys of HR executives and professionals are echoing a theme that HR/HRD should prepare to move into strategic positions in organizations (Caudron, 1994; Stuart, 1992; Walker, 1990;). The middle-management position is no longer appropriate for those who have inherited the role of developing, cultivating, training and supporting the central asset of organizations.

In order to pave the way and even have the time to reorient to a strategic role, HR/HRD will have to make decisions about which activities will be considered core activities and which can be spun-off. We are seeing that some CEOs consider less important such HR functions as compensation, benefits and labor (Stuart, 1992). Today it is not unusual to see many of these functions, including training, outsourced. Increasingly, CEOs want HR/HRD to provide them with fundamental business decisions and make suggestions for future developments. A call is going out for HR/HRD to become a strategic business partner and to address bottom-line business needs (Stuart, 1992).

Unfortunately, most HR/HRD departments don't have the clout to command CEO attention. Too often CEOs call in consultants to provide them with the same information their HR/HRD department has been trying to tell them for years (Weiss, 1997). Some experts believe that HR is frequently not even out front on issues that

should be its natural domain, such as workplace diversity, sexual harassment, work/family balance issues and goal alignment (Weiss, 1997). If we defined ourselves as organization architects and facilitators for human development, would there be any doubt that we should be on the leading edge of these issues that define even the current corporate landscape?

Interim Steps for Budding Corporate Architects . . .

In order to work toward a vision of becoming architects and facilitators of human development, we need to consider some pragmatic guidelines for getting there:

(1) We need to start with building our credibility as organization problem solvers. The good news here is that more and more CEOs are asking for this from HR/HRD (Stuart, 1992; Caudron, 1994). To achieve this goal will entail more learning about what contributes to bottom-line business results, including understanding the nature of the product, business direction of the company, who the customers are and how the business is positioned in the marketplace. This means developing a HR business plan with specific details regarding HR implications for each one of the company's business goals (Caudron, 1994).

(2) To augment goals of becoming strategic-minded regarding bottom-line business results, we, in this field, should assess our college and university HR/HRD programs to ensure that there is some "hard" business knowledge as part of the core curricula. It's not unusual to hear organization experts stating that MBAs are more useful than a Ph.D. in organization development (Weiss, 1997). Perhaps we should take this as a cue that we should incorporate *some* hard business courses. We must be careful not to over focus on business courses which could take us away from developing our human resources. It's important to consider what courses are essential to help HR/HRD become the central resource for performance development in an organization.

(3) Perhaps the best place for HR/HRD to start building credibility is to work to build and augment the relationship with our natural partners, the line-managers. Caudron (1994) asserts that HR/HRD has traditionally offered prepackaged HR services to the company, but is now shifting to provide service that helps line managers develop and manage their own HR policies. More companies today are utilizing HR as partners for their operating managers. Basically what is taking place is an exchange of functions: HR works with managers to handle some of the traditional HR functions, thereby, providing more time for HR managers to understand and help solve the bottom-line business problems of operating managers. Both work in concert to develop and provide an environment that enables employees to work in an optimum fashion (Caudron, 1994). Similarly, Confessore and Kops (1998) promote the concept that HRD professionals need to move beyond their role as trainers and "become coaches, consultants and counselors of learners."

(4) As we saw in item number (3), forming connections in the organization will be critical for our success. Additionally, HR, HRD and OD have, in many ways, like couples in a bad marriage, split up and gone their separate ways. Sadly, sometimes they don't even speak. The potency of our profession is dependent on working across these mechanistic barriers (Remember the paradigms!) and forging a comprehensive and integrated vision. The roles can still be separate in many ways, but we need to consider more cross-functionality of training and knowledge. Allison Rossett (1996) describes that HRD people often don't understand what organizational development is all about; thus, they fail to recognize when that is the solution, rather than training. She tells how AMOCO, following on the quality movement's emphasis on cross-functionality, asked her to help integrate their OD and HRD department. Also serving the theme of collaboration and connections, HR executives are frequently forming partnerships with other companies in an effort to leverage their collective technologies and other competencies (McMorrow, 1999).

Onward to the Challenge!

The end of this century brings us to an interesting crossroads. It's as if HR/HRD has been an understudy waiting in the wings backstage; suddenly we find ourselves thrust into the limelight, are we ready? A strategic role has been proffered -- can we handle it? It's not without good reason that HR has been called the "handmaiden of management". Vision, major decision-making and control have not been the norm. We know that with the new limelight on human resources in the knowledge age, a ball has definitely been tossed to us, whether we run with it or fumble depends on what we do now.

The paradigms we have reviewed have themes that could have profound implications for the future of HR/HRD. Even coming from divergent fields, they speak to us of a holistic unity of our world, permeated and interconnected through consciousness. Today we hear much about and are dazzled by the technological and scientific achievements of our world. So much so, that we almost have failed to notice our own development. It's certainly paradoxical that paradigms from the world of science are teaching us about the importance of developing the whole person and the creative role of consciousness in creating or "bringing forth" our world.

As we begin to consider our future in the next millenium, never have conditions been more favorable for a dynamic, new and strategic role for HR/HRD. Emerging into the era of the knowledge worker, we, as the traditional caretaker of human resources, find ourselves on center stage. By looking carefully at the prevailing scientific paradigms, we can see the outline of possible future developments that put us in our rightful place: at the heart of an organization.

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The Meaning of the Meaning of Work: A Literature Review Analysis

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This literature review addressed the state of research concerning the concept of the meaning of work. This analysis is an update of a preliminary review conducted four years ago. This inquiry built on the theoretical foundation of the content motivation theorists, but focused on what the research informs us about meaning of work as a motivational construct. Several elements were identified that could form the basis for such a construct.

Keywords: Meaning of Work, Spirituality, Self-Actualization

Four years ago, a small group of doctoral students studying with a faculty member of their HRD program conducted a preliminary literature search to see what research had been conducted in the area of meaning and spirituality of work. While they discovered there was relatively little research reported in the literature, there was enough to begin to formulate a set of conclusions around a dichotomy between values and meaning. Since then a number of other studies have been conducted that now allow us to perceive several consistencies among the findings about what is the meaning of the meaning of work.

"The managerial and popular literature is [still] increasingly referring to individuals questioning the meaning and purpose in their work" (Chalofsky et al, 1997. A significant number of the books published by the major management publishers certainly reflect this theme, as well as the popular and professional magazines. There are at least ten conferences a year on spirituality and work in this country and this same topic is beginning to be echoed internationally. The baby boomers are going through mid-life questioning the meaning and purpose of the work and their lives. The twenty somethings are questioning whether they even want to start down the path their parents took, career-wise, and are making different choices about the role of work in their lives.

Theoretical Framework

Gayle (1997) reported that the classic motivation theorists and humanistic psychologists clearly supported the notion that individuals have an inherent need for a professional life that they believe is meaningful (Alderfer, 1972; Herzberg, et al., 1959; Maslow, 1943, 1971; McGregor, 1960; Rogers, 1959, 1961). Maslow (1971) wrote that individuals who do not perceive the workplace as meaningful and purposeful will not work up to their professional capacity. Yet, with rapidly changing economic conditions, organizational structures, and job requirements, what once may have provided a measure of meaning and purpose for individuals in the workplace is eroding (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Shamir, 1991).

There is a long history of research and discourse about what motivates employees and the relationship between job satisfaction, morale and performance/productivity. As organizations became more complex, assumptions about the power of rewards such as pay, security, and working conditions were questioned. In addition, the correlation between morale and productivity was challenged. In response, the human relations movement produced theories focused on human needs. This classic motivation literature referred to work itself as the primary motivator.

Maslow (1943, 1954, 1970, 1971), Herzberg (1959), McClelland (1965), and Alderfer (1972), theorized that individuals are motivated to take certain actions based on fulfilling needs believed to be inherent in all humans. These content theorists all proposed that as these needs move from basic survival needs to higher order needs, they become more intrinsic and reflective in nature. The higher order needs are translated to values, working toward a higher cause; meaningfulness and life purpose. (Given the brevity of this paper, the individual theories of the authors mentioned above will not be discussed in detail.). A few theorists moved beyond the notion of the value of performing a set of tasks as a primary motivator, most notably Maslow (1971). After establishing

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his *hierarchy of needs,* he began to explore the meaning of work. This exploration was expressed in his description of being values, referred to as *B-values*. B-values included truth, transcendence, goodness, uniqueness, aliveness, justice, richness, and meaningfulness. A self-actualized person would feel that work equates with play and both become an integral part of a person's being. Maslow equated B-values with spiritual values which he believed is a part of the human essence (Gayle, 1997).

Also noteworthy is the thoughtful discourse from Rogers (1961), Locke (1975), and Ackoff (1981. Rogers (1961) believed that people find purpose when they experience freedom to be exactly who they are in a fluid and changing manner. Locke (1975) wrote that people strive to attain goals in order to satisfy their emotions and desires. Ackoff (1981) described purpose and meaning as progress toward an ideal that converts mere existence into
significant living by making choice meaningful. And lastly, further exploring the meaning of work would provide an opportunity to learn from where Maslow and others have left off.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to determine what the research and theory-building literature can inform us about the meaning of work. At the time we did our initial review, there was little or no research on the meaning of the meaning of work, even though the popular and professional literature has addressed the issue for years. We wanted to know not only what the more recent research is about, but also how it may change our initial perceptions of the scant research we found four years ago.

A review of this nature is important to: (1) develop a framework for understanding the construct, (2)how HRD practitioners may impact workplace productivity and satisfaction, and; (3) determine what gaps exist that warrant further research and theory-building.

Methodology

A literature review of researched-based articles, both quantitative and qualitative, was conducted in 1996. Business, psychology, sociology, and education literature was reviewed. The following databases were searched: ABI/Inform, Educational Resources Information Center, Psychological INFO (journal and articles), and Dissertation Abstracts. Keywords used in the literature search include: work values and beliefs, work and meaning, work and spirituality, motivation and meaning, motivation and high performance, purpose of work, work and personal growth. The same review was again conducted in 1999 to see what had been added to the literature. The resulting literature were reviewed and analyzed.

Findings

Two major areas within meaning of work were identified in the original literature review, values and meaning. This update has concentrated on the meaning of the meaning of work. But first a synopsis of the original review will be presented.

Values

A preliminary keyword search identified a limited number of literature reviews, articles from scholarly journals and abstracts of doctoral dissertations on "values" as they relate to "work" and "spirituality." The initially daunting variety of concepts that appeared in these articles was sorted into four clusters: cognition, emotion, action, and outcomes. The cluster titles also suggest a process of value formation.

The cognition cluster includes key words like valuing, comparing, recognition and assessment. The cognitive dimension of valuing involves the determination of whether an option is worthy, either intrinsically or in relationship to some extrinsic outcome. Broenen described cognition in valuing as "making subjective rankings or judgments about variables in one's environment that may relate to how satisfying one considers one's job" (1990, p.2).

The emotion cluster includes concepts like, needs, desire, and affect. George (1996) found that research

in subjective well being suggested that values, attitudes and moods form a powerful triple interaction that can affect job satisfaction and turnover. Emotions also help energize or motivate action. Action/Result keywords include performance, behavior, and goal achievement as outcomes of value motivated activity.

Much of the research on organizational behavior and human resource management involves the interaction of individual values with the workplace (Coomey, 1988; Carlson, 1995). Coomey reported that her search of the literature uncovered widely diverse definitions of values which she eventually consolidated into one. According to Coomey's definition, values are the transformations that take place between actual or perceived outcomes (rewards, losses, etc.) and affective states (satisfaction, dissatisfaction, etc.) which lead to action (behavior, performance, etc.). She further explained that values derive from a vast number of contextual variables like: childhood, education, occupation, personal goals, stage in the life cycle, perceived equity, organizational climate, outcomes, and values themselves. It was suggested, therefore, that values, instead of being isolated entities, more closely resemble a system.

Four themes that elaborate the cognitive, emotive, and action/result dimensions of value and work also emerged from the literature: (1) intrinsic vs. extrinsic factors; (2) work values and quality of work life; (3) subjective well-being and happiness; and (4) working hard vs. working smart.

Meaning

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) in his attempt to define meaning, readily acknowledged the difficulty the task presents by suggesting that any definition of the term would undoubtedly be circular. However, he points to three ways in which the word may be defined: (1) having a purpose or the significance of something, (2) the intentions one holds, and (3) identifying or clarifying the term in context. Similarly, one may attempt to define work. Dirkx (1995) subscribed to the theory that work is one of the ways that a mature adult cares for oneself and others. This was expressed by respondents in the Schaefer and Darling (1996) study who defined work as an opportunity for service to others and not distinct from the rest of life. The term may also be definitive of one's uniqueness and a way of expressing one's self in the world.

Adding the word "work" to meaning presents an even greater challenge at definition. Meaning of work suggests an inclusive state of being. It probably is that which seeks to define who we are, the purpose of our being, and the spirit with which we approach what we do. Put in a spiritual context, it is that which gives essence to what we do and what brings a sense of fulfillment to our lives. The literature indicates that meaning of work is a significant contributor to meeting one's purpose in life. Supporting conditions for its fulfillment are work spirit and the sense of being as founded in one's spirituality. These are regarded as cogent factors for finding meaning in one's work.

The conclusions we reached in the initial review revolved around a dichotomy between values and meaning in relation to work. The literature seemed to refer to values as intrinsic motivators to performing a job and deriving satisfaction from a job. The emphasis is on what the job means to us in terms of the congruence of the tasks with our beliefs, objectives, and anticipated rewards. Values are relatively easy to identify through instrumentation; and understanding the fit between values and job responsibilities significantly influences job satisfaction.

The meaning of work, on the other hand, . . ."comes from the inside out; work is the expression of our soul, our inner being" (Fox, 1994, p.5). The meaning of work is in and of itself much subtler; as is the distinction between meaning related to work and values related to a job. The distinction seems to lie in the notion that a job is what we *do*; work is who we *are*. We get paid to do our job; we are successful if we achieve some goal or target. Yet, as Fox points out, much work in our society is not paid at all; for example, raising children, tending a garden, singing in a choir, or organizing youth activities. So what then is the nature, the meaning, of the meaning of work?

Meaning of Work Research

Wishner's (1991) study on the influence of the meaning of work, among other constructs on job satisfaction of school psychologists, yielded interesting results. Though the prediction that the meaning of work was prominent and intrinsically important was not confirmed, the construct itself proved the single best prediction of job satisfaction. This indication propelled the researcher to conclude that the meaning of work has a more

pervasive role in the lives of individuals. Shamir (1991) reported that a task can be motivating due solely to its meaning to the individual, rather than for the intrinsic rewards it may bring. Jaeger (1994), in investigating the self-employed, concluded that among aspects of the Protestant work ethic, a need for meaningful work was the single most important descriptor which defined the individuals' sense of purpose in their contribution to the spirit of community living. Further, the researcher concluded that work was an accepted part of the participants' personal identity. It was that which brought meaning, enjoyment and satisfaction to their lives.

It seems that one's ability to achieve meaning from one's work depends on what one brings to the work itself. Loscocco (1985) identified two elements - work commitment and work orientation and suggested that these are designators through which people come to and assign particular meanings to the work they do. In one aspect, work commitment represents the relative contribution of work to the sense of self, while work orientation reflects the importance people attach to the various types of rewards available from the work they do.

Together, these ideas are reflective of Connelly's (1985) concept of work spirit, the set of qualities exhibited by people who enjoy their work enormously. Among these qualities are a positive state of mind, a sense of purpose and vision, and a full sense of self. One group of participants in Connelly's study describes work spirit as a "ground of being," a continuing state of mind from which everything else emerges. Connelly concluded from this study that people who love their work and find meaning in it realize that their work experience, to some extent, is dependent on what they themselves bring to the experience.

Shamir (1991) argued that current work-motivation theories should be augmented by the concept of self. He built a theory of self-concept-motivations on the following assumptions: that people are not only goal-oriented, but also self-expressive; that they are motivated to maintain and enhance their self-esteem, self-worth, and self-consistency. Shamir also postulated that self-concepts are composed, in part, of identities. He further suggests that self-concept-based behavior is not necessarily related to clear expectations or specific outcomes. These assumptions imply that work motivation will be increased when job related identities are prominent in the self-concept, and when the engagement offers opportunities for enhancing self-esteem and self-worth through actions that are consistent with the person's self-concept.

Pitts (1995) indicated that the ability to find meaning in one's work is an expression of one's sense of self. It seems then, that if people derive meaning from their work to the degree of how work spirit is described, then work becomes one means of how people are grounded in who they are as spiritual beings. Neck and Milliman (1994) suggest that a central aspect of spirituality involve the meaning of one's work. The concept itself (spirituality) is multi-dimensional and may be expressed as a transforming power or an expressed desire to find meaning and purpose in life. It also suggests a desire to make a difference and create a meaningful world, or an inner wisdom and compassion. Sveinunggaard (1992) similarly describes one's spirituality as a transformational life experience that gives rise to a reaffirmation of self-characterized by a contextual awareness of oneself as one journeys inward to discover the self.

The theory of self, as expressed through spirituality, is defined by Hartman (1996) as inclusive of all human experiences including work and one's experience of reality. Further, the researcher indicated that the meaning one encounters from this reality gives rise to the quest for significance. This theory is substantiated by McEnroe (1995) who claimed that the most significant factor contributing to outstanding leadership is the executives' strong inner core of spirituality which, among other competencies, include finding meaning in everyday life, what they do, and what happens to the organization.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) found in his research on high performance that people in what he refers to as a "flow state" actually feel a sense of disappointment when they achieve the objective of their performance, because the act of performing is the motivator; not the accomplishment of the task. People in the flow state derive meaning from their work because they both believe/know they will succeed and accept "failure" because it is worth the risk. So success is secondary to the work itself and risk (and possibly failure) increases the challenge and learning, two factors Gayle (1997) found that contribute to meaningfulness among high technology professionals. The people she researched were "gold collar" employees, technical experts in great demand in the workplace who know they can go anywhere and get as much salary as they desire. So the end-goal of money or status was not what was of importance to them, it was their ability to have an impact on the organization's effectiveness through the work, and the self-directed "space" to be continually challenged, creative, and learning. Similarly, Deems (1997) found that people in two organizations she studied perceived self-authority, participatory work practices, and continuous growth and development, as integral to the meaning of work.

Several studies have dealt specifically with women and meaning of work. Svendson's (1997) study looked at how women experience the attempt to achieve integrated wholeness, the merging of their professional

and personal selves. She found that the co-researchers brought their whole selves (mind, body, emotion, spirit) to their work and their "play", that relationships played a critical role in achieving integrated whole ness, and, again, the theme of continuous learning and growth. Ostendorf (1998) also found that the relationships women formed at work were integral to the meaning these women derived from their work. Personal growth and emotional well being were also themes that emerged in the study. Rulle's (1999) study of empowerment among nurses (all women) revealed the relationship between meaning, autonomy, and giving to others.

Jaeger (1994) also found the same relationship among self-employed persons. And giving to others was also a theme that emerged from Allan's (1996) study of CEO's and volunteerism and Mukri's (!998) study of Navy nurses and Schein's lifestyle career anchor. An additional theme that was the purpose of Svendson's study but also mentioned, though not clearly identified, in most of the above-cited studies was work/life balance. In Mukri's study, she found that the structure of the military actually provided the ability to commit to a balance between work and family, which was valued by the nurses and supported by the leadership.

The most recent study looked at spirituality in the workplace. Mitroff and Denton (1999) asked their respondents to define spirituality and the one word that captured their descriptions was interconnectedness. Yet their research question was about what gave the respondents the most meaning and purpose in their jobs. The findings of their survey were that people ranked the ability to realize their full potential as a person as their first choice, being associated with a good (ethical) company as their second choice, and interesting work as their third. Interestingly, the results of their follow-up interviews were that most people do not feel that they bring their whole selves to the workplace, thus they do not feel that the ability to reach their potential exists. There were other disconnects between what people believed in and what was practiced in their organizations.

There was one conclusion to their study that has significant implications for how we use the terms spirituality and meaning almost interchangeably. The popular literature tends to use the term spirituality and work; as in how can we help organizations to realize the power of spirituality at work. Yet the respondents talked about spirituality as being very personal and relating to all of their lives, not just in relationship to their jobs. Meaning of work, on the other hand, while also being very personal, resides in the interaction of the self and the work, and can be exclusive of the organization.

Conclusions

Based on a review of the literature, the following components of meaningful work were identified:

People need to bring their whole selves (mind, body, emotion, and spirit) to their work. The sense of self is critical to finding meaning in work. This includes both a very positive self-belief system and a total integration of the work self and the personal self. The positive belief system is what allows people to achieve the flow state and to thrill to the challenges and the learnings. It brings out the creative energy that results in highly productive efforts. The integration of the total self means that there is an alignment between the person's beliefs, values, and competencies, and the purpose for the work (and hopefully the mission of the organization). This alignment translates into an inner feeling that this is the work I was meant to do and this is how I was meant to live my life. Svendson (1997) used the term integrated wholeness to reflect this state of being.

Giving to others. Giving to the clients/customers of the work, to colleagues, to family and friends, and to community and society is a key component. It relates to the sense of spirituality and to the sense of mastery. The spirituality of the work is about contributing to others individually and collectively. To some it may refer to the notion of a *calling*, something a higher power or higher consciousness would expect. To others it relates more to social responsibility, what we should give back to society. The person who masters the skills and knowledge of the work shares that experience with apprentices, and this act provides additional learning and growth, as well as a sense of giving.

Recommendations for Further Research

It seems obvious that more research needs to be done to determine the impact of values and meaning on work, performance, and organizational effectiveness. We also need to learn more about the interrelationship between values and meaning, and between meaning and spirituality. We need to investigate the components of meaningful work in more depth, especially in the area of self-concept. Finally, we need to identify actual examples of

meaningful workplaces and share best practices.

Implications for the Field of HRD

In this age of the "new employee contract" we need to pay attention to:

> . . . our whole selves at work, to admit that some work has no meaning to us and offers no possibility of joy, to examine what work will have meaning to us and seek such work, to meet our co-workers self-to-self, center-to-center, and to stop pretending that our interior lives don't matter. (Only then) will our work become more joyful (and) our organizations will flourish with commitment, passion, imagination, spirit, and soul (Richards, 1995, p.94).

When the emphasis on performance is paramount over all else, employees gradually lose the meaning of their work. Such loss of meaning affects attitudes, behavior, and overall mental health. Our profession needs to search for and implement new workplace models that address work as both a vehicle for production and individual and social development and satisfaction.(Svendsen, 1997).

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